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President: Mr. Akram ..... (Pakistan)
later: Mr. Hachani (Vice-President) ..... (Tunisia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Keynote address by Mr. Gérard Latortue, Prime Minister of Haiti

1. **Mr. Latortue** (Prime Minister of Haiti) said that although the bar was very high, the fight against poverty and hunger deserved mobilization on a global scale. His Government, with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), had established a unique programme aimed at raising awareness of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) across the country. However, five years after the Millennium Summit, progress on meeting targets was insufficient on a global scale. Even if the prospects for some indicators in some regions were positive, huge discrepancies continued to exist between developed and developing countries.

2. Haiti, for its part, had seen some encouraging developments in the areas of gender equality, including a Government programme to promote women's rights, women's education and jobs for women in rural areas, combating HIV/AIDS and strengthening global partnerships. Since March 2005, his Government had established cooperation with the international community based on the Government's sectoral and global priorities. To facilitate coordination among donors, a special coordination structure had been established and met once a month to assess whether funds were being used in line with those priorities. As the representative of one of the poorest nations on the planet, he felt that it was essential for him to make some practical recommendations. For if it were true that there could be no development without security, it was equally true that security without development was wishful thinking. Given that poverty posed a permanent threat to peace and security, the Economic and Social Council should be as important as the Security Council within the United Nations system, since without development, peace and security would be only temporary.

3. Turning to his ten recommendations, which he hoped would provide a basis for discussion during the current session and act as pointers during the high-level summit in September 2005, he said that the Council should establish a more equitable international economic system that prioritized the creation of productive employment, particularly in rural areas; help set up basic infrastructures for development, such as access to energy and roads linking centres of agricultural production and commercial centres; promote technical standards and establish professional schools to produce skilled technicians; promote the creation of small and medium-sized industrial enterprises, particularly those involved in processing agricultural produce, and encourage exports of such processed products; mobilize donors to finance country-owned projects; and coordinate international financing to avoid overlap, duplication and waste, making coordination the primary mandate of a renewed and strengthened Council.

4. In addition, the Council should continue to seek new sources of financing, as many new programmes in developing countries failed to attract funding because they were not in line with donor priorities; promote an open, universal, regulated, predictable and non-discriminatory trade system that gave priority to development and greater market access for developing countries; find a definitive solution to debt, particularly that of the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island States, which, despite suffering from potentially devastating natural phenomena and fragile economies, seemed to be ignored by the international community; and, lastly, recognize the integrated nature of development policies and the need for sustainability in development projects. In that regard, the Council needed to review the mandates of the various United Nations agencies in order to reduce or eliminate useless competition between them in the allocation of development projects.

5. Expressing the concern of Haiti and many other developing countries regarding the ongoing marginalization of LDCs in the global economy and the continued deterioration of their economic and social situations, despite the many international conferences held and agreements reached, he called on the international community to implement the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. Also expressing concern about the particular vulnerability of small island developing States, he called on world leaders to implement the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Lastly, it was his sincere hope that the Council

would become one of the most dynamic United Nations bodies in the field of development.

Ministerial review of the progress of the implementation of the 2003 Ministerial Declaration of the Economic and Social Council

6. **The President** recalled that, during the 2003 high-level segment, Ministers had debated the issue of an integrated approach to rural development and adopted the 2003 Ministerial Declaration of the Council, a far-reaching and visionary document based on the recognition that the majority of the world's poor lived and worked in rural areas. Ministers had agreed on the importance of rural development for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and reached consensus on a broad set of measures aimed at attaining rural development objectives. In line with the Council's commitment to review progress or lack thereof in the implementation of the Declaration at the current substantive session, and in the absence of a formal report, the Council had invited a number of speakers to share examples of progress on promoting an integrated approach to rural development.

7. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that the Council's review of the Ministerial Declaration should focus on assessing progress in relation to basic policies and the Declaration's central message concerning the need to bring rural development back to the forefront. Rural development must be a central component of strategies to meet the MDGs. The Declaration's emphasis on the need for an integrated approach to rural development had raised questions of inter-agency cooperation. In line with that collaborative approach, there was now close and active cooperation between the Secretariat, United Nations agencies and financial institutions. A considerable effort had also been made to engage the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), the Rome-based agencies, in the system.

8. As to how new initiatives could be linked to the Declaration, a number of new poverty-reduction alliances had been established, such as the United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development (2003), which had galvanized the efforts of the United Nations system as a whole and civil society, acted as a catalyst for establishing partnerships and brought results to the attention of the international community through the Council. The current review was evidence of the Council's continued focus on monitoring implementation and would help the Council to consolidate its experience while yielding valuable insights into the way in which it monitored implementation in the future.

9. **Mr. Båge** (President, International Fund for Agricultural Development) said that significant progress had been made on many general issues, such as official development assistance (ODA), debt relief and international funding for agriculture, and, even though there had been less progress on trade-related issues, the pressure on the current Doha round of the World Trade Organization negotiations provided some hope in that area too. However, much less progress had been made concerning funding levels and the attention given to rural development both by Governments and in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

10. While welcoming the fact that African heads of State and Government had recently reinforced their commitment to allocate at least 10 per cent of their budgetary resources to agriculture and rural development, he said that agricultural ODA remained very low. That was worrying not only because 74 per cent of people living on less than $1 a day resided in rural areas and depended on agriculture, but also because agriculture accounted for 30 per cent of gross national product (GDP), 40 per cent of exports and 70 per cent of employment in sub-Saharan Africa and 27 per cent of GDP and 60 per cent of employment in South Asia. Agriculture was clearly crucial to poverty reduction and economic growth, yet the level of funding pledged in the Declaration had not materialized. Countries and regions enjoying long-term investment in agriculture had seen economic growth rise, and there was a clear link between greater investment and greater results. However, in many instances, agricultural ODA had actually fallen in recent years.

11. Stressing that such a situation should provide clear impetus for action, he said that one area of concern was infrastructure, for transportation costs, whether relating to agricultural produce, irrigation or fertilizer, varied dramatically from one country to another and were often much higher in developing countries. There was a clear link between input and output and the effects on poverty eradication, human

dignity and so forth. While attention to rural development and agriculture had grown over the past two years, more funding was needed if the MDGs were going to be met for all people in all regions. Drawing attention to the issues paper which had been circulated, and which set out in greater detail the progress made by the three Rome-based agencies, he said that, in his experience, while there seemed to be widespread concern that more needed to be done, for many countries rural development was simply not a priority and therefore received little attention. However, nothing could be more important for development in general than rural development and agriculture, hence the importance of the current review.

12. Lastly, the draft outcome document of the upcoming high-level summit did not adequately address the role of rural development and agriculture in meeting the MDGs. The Council might, therefore, wish to consider conducting a more comprehensive review of progress in implementing the Declaration in 2008, five years after its adoption.

13. **Mr. Morris** (Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP)) said that the Programme was very enthusiastic about the Declaration and strongly committed to creating an economic environment conducive to rural development. Achieving the MDGs was a powerful factor in that regard. The international community's single most important undertaking was to cut poverty in half by 2015 and to do it by eliminating child hunger. Through that vehicle, significant progress would also be made on other development goals.

14. WFP was working with the Government of Madagascar to improve the resilience of rural communities in the event of natural shocks, especially in the most vulnerable areas. It was also committed to buying products locally or regionally wherever possible and provided that such action did not distort markets. WFP worked mainly with women, as they provided 80 per cent of food and almost all of the homecare in most of Africa. Some 60 per cent of ration cards were issued to women, who were sure to use them properly. WFP had also insisted that at least half the members of food distribution committees must be women.

15. WFP was also looking at the impact of HIV/AIDS on women and children, particularly in the context of AIDS orphans. However, feeding children was no substitute for healthy mothers, and WFP therefore worked closely with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) on mother-child programmes. Because of the huge number of people in Africa who had died, or were unable to work, as a result of AIDS, knowledge about farming that had traditionally been passed from one generation to the next was being lost. In response, WFP had established a programme to train AIDS orphans in farm management.

16. Most child deaths were due not to major emergencies, but to hunger. The fact that 18,000 children a day — or one child every five seconds — died from hunger was simply unacceptable. For that reason, WFP was working with the World Bank, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and UNICEF to eliminate child hunger, particularly in rural areas. Sending a girl child to school for just five years had major repercussions in other areas too — agriculture, HIV/AIDS, low birth weight, etc. — and was not expensive. There was therefore no substitute for ensuring that rural children were properly fed, clothed and schooled.

17. **Mr. Andrianarivelo-Razafy** (Madagascar) said his Government was committed to advancing the economic and social welfare of the rural population. Two aspects for attaining overall progress in rural development in his country were important, namely Madagascar's partnerships with the United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development and the Millennium Challenge Account. In both cases Madagascar had taken the lead: it was both the first pilot country of the United Nations Public-Private Alliance and the first country to conclude an agreement with the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

18. Those initiatives were important since 80 per cent of Madagascar's population lived in rural areas below the poverty line, and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) showed that they had failed to benefit from the macroeconomic growth attained during the 1997-2001 period. The pilot project, carried out in conjunction with United Nations agencies had undertaken a number of initiatives, which included promoting and facilitating bankable projects from the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO. In the microfinance sector, the United Nations Public-Private Alliance had arranged partnerships to expand rural credit. A partnership had been arranged between the IBM and the World Wildlife Fund on small grants, which balanced environmental protection and income

generation at the village level; and assistance was being rendered in marketing value-added products, especially handicrafts.

19. Madagascar was the first beneficiary country of the Millennium Challenge Account. Its programme sought to bring rural Madagascar from a subsistence economy to a market economy by raising agricultural productivity and increasing agro-investment in targeted high potential areas. The programme focused on improving the environment for private sector investment through legal and policy reforms by increasing land security, developing the financial infrastructure and providing knowledge of market opportunities in rural areas, all of which contributed to economic growth and poverty reduction. To that end, the Government would target five geographical areas, on the basis of their potential for development in the above areas, through projects relating to land tenure, finance and agricultural investment.

20. **Ms. Kramer-LeBlanc** (Millennium Challenge Corporation) said the Millennium Development Corporation, which administered the Millennium Development Account, had been established in 2004 by the United States Administration. In doing so, the Administration had taken three important lessons of development into account: firstly, aid was most effective when it reinforced sound political, economic and social policies; secondly, country ownership was integral to a successful development programme; and, thirdly, programmes worked best when countries were accountable for their performance and results.

21. Countries competing for Millennium Challenge Corporation assistance were selected on the basis of their performance against indicators linked to three categories developed by international institutions: ruling justly, investing in people and encouraging economic freedom. Since a basic philosophy of the Millennium Challenge Corporation was that "country ownership" was integral to the success of any development plan, a country was responsible for putting good policies in place. To that end, the Millennium Challenge Corporation recognized that countries receiving its assistance needed to both identify their own obstacles to growth and be responsible for designing and implementing plans to overcome these obstacles.

22. In establishing development priorities for applicants, the Millennium Challenge Corporation asked the Governments to consult with representatives of civil society, NGOs, the private sector, other donors, local and regional leaders, and parliamentarians. There were three main requirements when evaluating a country's consultative process: the proposal for funding should be developed early, it should take into account a broad range of views, including those of women and the rural and urban poor, and countries should provide a monitoring and evaluation plan. In linking funding to programme results, the Millennium Challenge Corporation sought the best investment opportunities for poverty reduction. The Millennium Challenge Corporation had received its first proposals in the fall of 2004, and in April 2005 had signed its first compact with Madagascar, and other compacts would soon be signed with Nicaragua, Honduras and Cape Verde.

23. **Mr. Mantovani** (European Commission) said that the Commission was preparing a new policy that would place even greater emphasis on rural development and agriculture. Action would be pursued on two levels to implement the 2003 Ministerial Declaration, at the level of development policy, for which five key actions had been identified, and at the trade level. The key development policy areas included attaining food security, for which the European Commission had developed a policy for limiting the use of food aid to humanitarian crises to minimize its negative impact on local economies; achieving sustainable land management; developing an innovative land policy to effect land reform; and addressing the plight of commodity-dependent countries. Regarding trade, the European Commission had consistently been working on a development-friendly outcome of the Doha round of the WTO negotiations. With regard to increasing resources for rural areas, national strategies needed to give greater priority to rural development and agriculture, which would in turn lead to increased donor support.

24. **Mr. Abdoul Aziz Sow** (Minister of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), African Integration and Good Governance of Senegal) noted that extreme poverty in Senegal was predominantly a rural phenomenon and affected women and children in particular. To enable people to break out of that vicious cycle, the Government had established a decentralized rural development strategy, whose goals were to provide rural populations with

access to essential social services — health, education, drinking water.

25. Despite improvements in the food situation and literacy levels thanks to the strategy, poverty levels among the rural population remained high, which made the need for cooperation with various regional and international institutions indispensable. Given the central role that agriculture played in the fight against poverty, a green revolution should be launched, without which the Ministerial Declaration would not be implemented for hundreds of millions of impoverished Africans.

26. **The President** said that the floor was open for comments and questions.

27. **Mr. Gagain** (Observer for the Dominican Republic) said that his country had been one of the eight pilot countries of the Millennium Project, and a presidential commission had been established on the Millennium Development Goals. After evaluating its needs with a team lead by Jeffrey Sachs, the Government was giving priority to developing a plan to promote more integrated rural development that would be oriented towards the marginal population. What was needed was an agenda for the poor. The population of the Dominican Republic totalled 9 million people, two thirds of whom lived in rural areas.

28. **Mr. de Haen** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that it was no exaggeration to assert that the battle to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the goal of poverty and hunger reduction, would be won or lost in the rural areas of developing countries. To win that battle, rural households needed to enjoy income growth, income vulnerability had to be reduced, and a vibrant rural economic space was needed since it offered employment and income diversification. Rural societies also often served as a social buffer for the urban poor in periods of economic crisis or social urban unrest. Challenges to agriculture and the rural areas of developing countries had to be met, such as increasing food production for a growing and increasingly urbanized population; and institutional structures needed to be strengthened to ensure an integrated approach to development. While incentives for broad-based employment in rural areas were required, subsidies for labour-saving technologies, such as mechanization and agrochemicals, worked against employment creation and should be avoided.

29. Small-scale farmers also had to adapt to the rapid transformation of food systems already under way. Global food chains were expanding rapidly in developing countries. For example, supermarkets now controlled 50 per cent to 60 per cent of the food retail sector in Latin America and were expanding rapidly in Africa. A danger posed to small farmers was that in rural areas the abandonment of agriculture was occurring faster than the creation of employment opportunities.

30. While there was no unique rural development model, a number of general principles could be identified. They included following a balanced approach between support to productive activities, in particular agriculture, and social investments; ensuring multiple sources of income for the rural poor by introducing policies and investments beneficial to a wide range of subsectors and facilitating private sector investment; and strengthening institutional structures to bring about an integral and participatory approach to rural development.

31. Putting such measures into practice called for an increase in funding, both external and domestic. In that regard, FAO was pleased to note the resolution of the African Union on increasing the share of agriculture and rural development in national budgets to 10 per cent. A particular challenge would be to meet two Millennium Development Goals simultaneously, namely eradicating poverty and hunger and ensuring environmental sustainability.

32. **Mr. Moore** (Observer for the International Land Coalition) said that there was a need to redress power imbalances that limited the capacity of poor families to gain or protect their access to productive assets, particularly land. Since access to land and related resources touched upon fundamental inequalities in rural areas, challenges were great and progress had been mixed. Since 2003, there had been greater sharing of knowledge among countries on successes achieved by Governments committed to those difficult challenges. His organization had worked with several governments to foster greater stakeholder participation in policy formulation and the implementation of improved systems for land management. However, in some cases, the political will was lacking, especially when the political and landed elites were one and the same. The international community must ensure that the Ministerial Declaration continued to receive attention and was further reviewed in 2008. He

encouraged Governments to stress the need for agrarian reform and rural development in the negotiated text for the 2005 World Summit.

33. **Mr. Bâge** (President, International Fund for Agricultural Development), summing up the discussions, noted that several speakers had emphasized agriculture, rural development for broad-based growth and poverty reduction in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Macroeconomic growth alone did not guarantee rural poverty reduction. Many countries had shared their experiences in the area of poverty eradication. The importance of political will and leadership to tackle the problem of rural poverty had been stressed as well as the need for countries to take ownership of the development process and for donors to respect country ownership. In that regard, the full participation of the rural poor, who often constituted the majority of the poor, in the design of poverty reduction strategies was absolutely crucial.

34. It was also necessary to address issues relating to access by the poor to land, natural resources, water, finance and markets, both at the local and global levels. The need for access to technology and the fruits of research through extension and institutions that were accountable to and helpful in empowering the poor, food security and nutrition, pro-poor agro-business and the role of the private sector had also been mentioned, as had been the need to more proactively integrate local rural development strategies with national development strategies.

35. In terms of rural-urban linkages, there was a need to provide, in a twin-track approach, both social services, education, water and sanitation and direct support to the productive sector of agriculture so as to generate incomes and make the social services sustainable in terms of boosting incomes. There was also a very strong gender dimension to the challenge under discussion, since rural smallholder farmers were, more often than not, women. Indeed, there was a need to capture the rich challenge contained in the 2003 Ministerial Declaration in the outcome document of the September Summit.

Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities
(*continued*)

36. **Mr. Biaou** (Benin), noting that paragraph 15 of the Millennium Declaration clearly spelled out the needs of least developed countries, said that the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries should be evaluated in the global context of development goals agreed at the international level. In that regard, significant progress had not been achieved in implementing the Millennium Development and official development assistance goals. While the least developed countries assumed primary responsibility for their development, they expected developed countries and international organizations, including those of the United Nations system, to assist them in their efforts in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity through genuine partnerships. In that regard, the least developed countries had established partnerships with bilateral and multilateral partners which should eventually lead to progressive and harmonious sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in those countries. Since the adoption of the Brussels Programme of Action, the least developed countries had tried to honour their commitments, but the reaction of their development partners was still lukewarm.

37. He welcomed the fact that many initiatives would be presented at the forthcoming World Summit in September in order to find innovative mechanisms for promoting development. In that regard, consideration should be given to establishing a mechanism for holding accountable individually and/or collectively the parties involved in the implementation of the commitments entered into. Such a mechanism should also periodically evaluate progress achieved in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and remind each of the actors of their obligations. The current and future sessions of the Council should devote particular attention to the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Desertification, one of the most appropriate instruments for combating rural poverty. The Convention should also feature prominently in the debate and decisions of the forthcoming Summit in September. He urged the

development partners of the least developed countries to ensure that the objectives of the Programme of Action were achieved by 2010.

38. **Mr. Anyang'Nyong'o** (Kenya) said that the political will of African Governments together with the goodwill of their development partners were required in building up the capacities of Governments, the private sector and civil society to reach the Millennium Development Goals. Democracy was one of the key challenges that African countries must address in that regard. Indeed, without a sound, open and accountable democracy, it would be very difficult for Africa, and in particular Kenya, to develop the capacity for prudent public financial management. Peace and security in Africa would depend more on the entrenchment of true democracy than on any other factor.

39. In order to meet the Millennium Development Goals, African countries needed to build up their educational facilities, train teachers, administrative staff and supervisors and provide teaching materials. They must also improve the infrastructure and manpower of health-care systems and build capacity to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV as well as the incidence of tuberculosis and various strains of drug-resistant malaria. To improve access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, they must invest heavily in infrastructure supporting those sectors in both the urban and rural areas.

40. Lasting prosperity and stability would only be achieved and poverty eliminated if countries created wealth and employment. That would mean securing property rights for the poor and creating enabling legal frameworks and institutions that allowed them to turn their buildings, livestock and other marketable assets into credit. Africa simply did not have or was not creating the types of incomes and employment that would enable its people to stave off hunger and accumulate savings and assets. Most farm production could not accomplish that, nor could the informal sector, which often employed 9 out of 10 people in Africa. Neither of those sources of employment created the types of networks and benefits that would allow those in formal employment, whether in the private sector or government, to accumulate savings and assets.

41. The availability of formal employment opportunities in the private sector must be dramatically increased. African countries needed capacity to turn their farmers into profit-oriented producers operating agro-businesses to sell value-added products. They also needed the capacity to turn informal entrepreneurs into formal, registered, taxpaying businesses with secure property rights and the ability to tap into credit markets. Those entrepreneurs would also be producers of value-added goods and services or of outsourced manufacturing and services from developed countries as well as sub-contractors to larger local firms. Over the next 25 years, Kenya, for example, must move three quarters of its labour force out of agriculture and the informal sector into the formal sector. None of those tasks were easy to accomplish, but they were possible with strong political will and financial investment by African Governments, technical assistance from developed-country partners, the opening up of markets and private sector encouragement in Western countries. His Government was taking measures, including under its Economic Recovery Strategy, to ensure that there were adequate structures and capacities to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

42. **Mr. Mohamed** (Malaysia) said that the Millennium Development Goals constituted the minimum that needed to be achieved. It was regrettable that they failed to address all systemic issues critical to sustained growth, such as the impact of globalization, as well as greater participation of developing countries in global governance. Recent experience had shown that the fight against poverty could be won. Poverty was on the retreat in large swathes of the world, including China and India. His country's own experience in achieving and exceeding all but one of the targets well ahead of 2015 had shown that, with the right sequencing of economic and social policies, it could be done.

43. In Malaysia's experience, political will and domestic capacity-building were among the main prerequisites for those targets to be achieved. However, in addition to Governments, the private sector and civil society also should play a role. It was equally important to ensure that gains achieved were consolidated and built upon. He offered some thoughts on how the Goals could be achieved with regard to financing for development, coherence and the social underpinnings of economic growth. Development was not achievable in the absence of adequate, sustained and predictable flows of ODA and foreign direct investment. The Monterrey Consensus was the right

framework for achieving that. The main issue that needed to be addressed in the context of the Consensus was the implementation deficit. In that regard, he welcomed the adoption by the European Union of a timetable for increasing the levels of funding for ODA to reach the 0.7 per cent target by 2015. The monitoring mechanism proposed under the Plan of Action adopted at the Second South Summit in Doha would provide greater impetus to efforts to increase sources of financing for development. The Council could play a role in that regard in collaboration with other relevant bodies and organizations.

44. Emphasis should also be given to the issue of coherence, which should be considered at three levels. First, it should be ensured that what donor countries gave with the right hand was not taken away by the left hand. Secondly, there should be coherence in the policies of the developing countries, which should go a long way in maximizing aid effectiveness. Thirdly, there should be coherence among the multilateral institutions, particularly the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization. Malaysia's own experience had shown that economic growth alone provided no guarantee that the people, especially those in the rural areas, would have access to adequate social services, the key to having a decent quality of life. He therefore suggested that the United Nations and its specialized agencies should undertake studies on the mechanisms by which social expenditures could contribute towards the development process.

45. *Mr. Hachani (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

46. **Mr. Maokola-Majogo** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his Government had implemented a number of policy strategies, including the Development Vision 2025, the National Poverty Eradication Strategy and, most recently, the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty, which was based on the Millennium Development Goals. Progress had been made towards attaining some of the Goals, such as universal primary education and the empowerment of women. More effort, both nationally and internationally, would be required, however, to meet the timetables for the other Goals. Thus, although poverty had declined slightly, 18.7 per cent of the population was food poor and 35.7 per cent could not meet their basic needs.

47. The Government would need to modernize the agricultural sector, which provided a living for 82 per cent of the population, but at the international level, fair and stable commodity prices, the elimination of trade barriers, the development of productive capacities, processing industries, technology transfer and public-private partnerships were also required. His country had taken measures to mainstream gender issues in all development policies. It had also amended the Constitution to ensure that 30 per cent of parliamentarians were women. Gender parity levels were encouraging in primary and secondary education, but were less satisfactory in higher education.

48. Despite Government efforts, there had been no substantial progress in reducing child mortality, partly owing to the prevalence of malaria and other communicable diseases over the past decades. Efforts to reduce maternal mortality through immunization, family planning and emergency treatment at delivery continued. Meanwhile, the increase in the number of people infected with HIV/AIDS undermined the prospects of attaining any development goals and various initiatives had been undertaken to build a deeper understanding of the pandemic. Although committed to ensuring environmental sustainability, his Government was conscious that the rural poor people of Tanzania could not subordinate their needs to conservation of the environment. Assistance from the developed countries was, therefore, necessary to eradicate poverty. The preliminary achievements of the National Strategy required support from increased foreign flows in the form of official development assistance, foreign direct investment and debt cancellation.

49. **Mr. Camara** (Guinea) said that, since the Millennium Summit, a broad consensus had gradually developed on the approach to be adopted to the numerous challenges faced by the developing countries, including sexual equality, social integration, good governance and the rule of law, as well as health, education and employment. His delegation welcomed the attention given to Africa's specific needs in various United Nations reports and called on the international community to support Africa's leaders in implementing the Millennium Development Goals, especially the efforts of the African Union in developing the New Partnership for Africa's Development. In his own country, the Government had set up a follow-up and evaluation group to assess progress made under the

Poverty Reduction Strategy introduced in 2000, which aimed to speed up economic growth, provide access to basic social services and improve governance.

50. The rebel and terrorist attacks against the country in September 2000, which had resulted in the loss of human life, material damage and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, leaving huge numbers of refugees still in Guinean territory, had been instrumental in slowing the growth of the economy to 2.6 per cent per year, as against 4.3 per cent in 1998. Inflation, which had averaged 3.5 per cent in the 1990s, had reached 27 per cent in 2004. With the support of the United Nations Development Programme, it had been possible to identify the main indicators and analyse the prospects of attaining the Millennium Development Goals. The restoration of peace in Sierra Leone and Liberia and the end of the rebel attacks, with the subsequent launch of reconstruction work in the affected areas, which had great agricultural potential, would give new impetus to economic growth and rural production.

51. The Government was determined to pursue its efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals and, in that context, he thanked the country's bilateral and multilateral partners for their support. If radical measures were not taken to reverse the imbalances of the international system, however, the Goals would be hard to achieve. The international community must honour its commitment to the establishment of a multilateral trade system based on fair and non-discriminatory rules. The Doha round of trade negotiations should be relaunched and the rich countries should eliminate the subsidies that harmed the developing countries' agricultural markets and production. The decision on debt cancellation by the G-8 countries was most welcome in that context.

52. His delegation also supported the suggestion that a tolerable level of debt should be defined as one that enabled a country to attain the Goals by 2015 without any increase in the rate of indebtedness. It was also in favour of the establishment of the International Financial Facility. The work by Brazil, Chile, France, Germany and Spain on scaling up development financing was to be commended. The forthcoming Summit could be instrumental in advancing development and he encouraged the Economic and Social Council to make its specific contribution by identifying the principal areas of activity that could aid development. The proposed new institutional arrangements to speed up the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals were encouraging.

53. **Mr. Suruma** (Observer for Uganda) said that his country had achieved some degree of success in eradicating poverty: per capita incomes had grown 3.7 per cent a year since 1991 and the percentage of the population below the poverty line had fallen from 56 per cent in 1992 to 38 per cent in 2003. Rapid population growth, however, meant that the number of people living below the poverty line had declined only marginally. The Government had therefore intensified implementation of its Poverty Eradication Action Plan by increasing public expenditure on agriculture. Microcredit was being made more available and affordable to peasant farmers. Since 75 per cent of Uganda's households derived their livelihood directly from agriculture, productivity in that sector was essential.

54. The formation of the East African Customs Union in February 2005 would improve market opportunities for the country's agricultural products. Reform was, however, needed in the world trading system, with the abolition of tariff and non-tariff barriers. Significant progress had been made in the area of education and gender equality. Thanks to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, it had been possible to fund universal primary education, and the gender difference in primary school enrolment had already disappeared.

55. Uganda had been able to reduce the HIV/AIDS infection rate to between 6 per cent and 7 per cent, down from 30 per cent in the 1990s. Malaria remained the principal killer in Uganda and maternal and infant mortality remained unacceptably high. The international community had been of great assistance, but he urged that concerns about macroeconomic absorptive capacity should not stand in the way of appropriate aid. Essential drugs should not be withheld on the grounds that the economy was too small to absorb external aid funds. As for access to safe water, coverage had reached 58 per cent in rural areas and 93 per cent in urban areas; full coverage was expected by 2015. Progress on sanitation, however, was not so far advanced.

56. Although Uganda had made great efforts in virtually all the areas required to attain the Millennium Development Goals — a liberal market environment, a flexible public-private partnership, constitutional governance, a reformed financial sector, an improved

banking system, a better road network and a reinvigorated telecommunications sector, with 6 per cent average annual real growth in gross domestic product over the past 20 years — much remained to be done. Above all, the infrastructure was insufficient to support the economy. Power generation capacity must be boosted and the railway to the sea overhauled. Lastly, his delegation welcomed the debt cancellation announced by the G-8 countries and hoped that it would become available in time to make a decisive contribution to Africa's heavy infrastructure burdens.

57. **Mr. Angula** (Namibia) said that progress in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, had been slow in sub-Saharan Africa. The results in Namibia were mixed: progress had been significant or moderate in some areas and slow in others. Following the launch of its Poverty Reduction Strategy in 1998, which had been followed by a comprehensive Poverty Reduction Action Programme for the period 2001-2005, Namibia had recently embarked on a Participatory Poverty Assessment. The Assessment had been completed in three out of the country's 13 regions and would shortly be extended to the others. The outcomes would be utilized in the formulation of the Third National Development Plan 2006-2011.

58. Progress had been made in education: basic education was free and accessible to all, showing gender parity and a net enrolment rate exceeding 87 per cent. Namibia was one of the few countries in Africa that maintained a social safety net for vulnerable groups such as senior citizens, orphans, people with disabilities and war veterans. Given that the livelihood of most of the population depended on agriculture, the Government had embarked on rural infrastructure development. It had also made good progress in the provision of safe drinking water, in which the target of providing 80 per cent of the rural and 95 per cent of the urban population with water by 2006 had already been achieved. Its national housing programme had also been successful.

59. HIV/AIDS had been the leading cause of death since 1996 and also a threat to sustainable development, since it diverted resources from other sectors. The epidemic had stabilized, though prevalence was still alarmingly high. In the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women, Namibia had introduced the National Gender Policy and National Gender Plan of Action, the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act, the Combating of Rape Act (which also recognized marital rape) and the Married Persons Equality Act. Among decision makers at the political level, 34.7 per cent were women, as were 26.9 per cent of parliamentarians. Combating desertification, land degradation and loss of biodiversity were priorities for fighting poverty. The Government devoted particular attention to capacity-building for the management of natural resources.

60. As one of the most stable market economies in Africa, with a commitment to democracy, human rights, transparency and good governance, Namibia had recently established the Anti-Corruption Commission. Any advances, however, were hindered by factors beyond the country's control, such as HIV/AIDS, poverty and food insecurity. Yet Namibia was classified as a lower middle-income country on the basis of the annual average per capita income. In reality, it had one of the highest levels of income disparity in the world, owing to the legacy of apartheid. Over 80 per cent of the population could not be classified as middle-income citizens and it was unjust that, on the basis of that classification, official development assistance had declined.

61. The problems of countries in such a position should not be overlooked by the United Nations and the international community. Like other developing countries, Namibia lacked the human and institutional capacity to deal with development issues, especially in trade, mobilization of resources and service provision. It also lacked appropriate technologies. Globalization presented more challenges than opportunities. Practical steps should be taken to ensure that countries like his own were not left behind.

62. **Mr. Truszczyński** (Poland) said that his Government recognized the key role of the Economic and Social Council in improving the integration of United Nations activities and favoured the strengthening of the Council's relations with the international financial institutions and regional development organizations.

63. Account should be taken of the diversity and interests of different countries and groups; the situation should not be reduced to a mere North-South dichotomy. Stronger support should also be given to regional integration mechanisms such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to

complement the special consideration given to the least developed countries. At the same time, more attention should be paid to the situation of countries with economies in transition. Assistance to countries such as his own, characterized by good governance, respect for human rights, economic growth and private-sector development enabled them to evolve from aid recipients to emerging donor countries.

64. Over the past few years, Poland had greatly increased its official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries and those in transition, and was determined to meet the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product by 2010. Increased, predictable and stable ODA was fundamental; in that regard, the European Union's decision to set new, collective ODA targets was welcome. An open and equitable trading system was essential, with duty-free and quota-free treatment being accorded to the exports of least developed countries, account also being taken of the per capita income differences among them.

65. Poland acknowledged the debt-sustainability framework prepared by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and welcomed the new strategies envisaged by the G-8 group of industrialized nations for dealing with the debts of poor countries. There was a need to look beyond the year 2015 and consider a new generation of long-term policies and programmes to deal with globalization, uneven economic growth and demographic changes, with more attention to broad social programmes that would help eliminate poverty and ensure decent living standards. With momentum gathering, development issues had reached the forefront of the political agenda, auguring well for the success of the September Summit.

66. **Mr. Kasemsuvan** (Thailand) observed that there was no room for complacency in working towards the Millennium Development Goals, noting that one third of the time frame had already elapsed. To attain sustained economic growth, combined international efforts and a synergized strategy were needed among both developing and developed nations.

67. The G-8 countries' announcement of 100 per cent debt relief for the most heavily indebted poor countries was welcome. Expanding that to include all heavily indebted developing countries would be a major step towards freeing up those countries' energies and resources. The recent upward trend in ODA was also encouraging. The European Union's commitment to meet the 0.7 per cent target for ODA by 2015 was commendable, and Thailand hoped the rest of the developed world would follow suit. All sectors and all stakeholders must share the sense of responsibility and commitment, and the public-private partnership must be encouraged.

68. In the light of the hard lessons that it had learned from the 1997 Asian financial crisis, Thailand could share its ideas with its friends in the developing world. There was a need to empower the grass roots of the economy, giving them access to resources, including microcredit facilities and revolving village funds, in order to turn indigenous skills into income. Job-creation and income-generation schemes, with the Government and private sector providing ideas, publicity and marketing, were a valuable means of improving livelihoods. The private sector could also help augment rural incomes by promoting computer literacy and cyberspace marketing.

69. In Thailand, rapid progress was being made. Local economies living within their own means had been created. While prospering itself, Thailand also believed in helping other developing countries to prosper, and accordingly had expanded its development-partnership strategy with all its immediate neighbours. It had also concluded partnership agreements with developed countries with a view to helping other developing countries. The current high-level segment, the September Summit and the United Nations reforms would bring new hopes, opportunities and progress towards the millennium goals. Thailand pledged to collaborate with a view to making 2015 a landmark for generations to come.

70. **Mr. Winkler** (Observer for the Czech Republic) said that his country had expanded its development cooperation in the past five years by more than tripling its ODA. Most of that took the form of bilateral projects of various kinds, targeting the social and economic infrastructure of developing countries. More than 20 such projects were under way in developing countries, including several least developed countries.

71. The Czech Republic believed in promoting education and training for sustainable development. It sought partnerships to assist in implementing the Millennium Development Goals. In that respect, it attached great importance to Africa's development and recalled the European Union's commitments, including increased financial assistance to sub-Saharan Africa. In

conclusion, he stressed the important role played by the Economic and Social Council for the whole development system.

72. **Mr. Jusys** (Lithuania) said that, in his delegation's view, the Millennium Development Goals could be achieved only if there was focused political will and concerted action. Rich and poor nations alike must make a joint commitment, and actions needed to be well-targeted and coordinated at all levels. International cooperation had to be better tailored to national efforts, and national strategies needed to be more ambitious. Those strategies should also help to strengthen good governance — including financial accountability — promote human rights, involve civil society and promote the private sector.

73. The relationship between developed and developing countries should shift from that of donor-recipient to a true partnership, strengthening the developing countries' sense of ownership of the processes. Moreover, international aid must be made more effective. Bilateral and multilateral donors needed to harmonize their operational procedures and align aid with country-specific priorities, and results should be measurable. His delegation supported the idea of innovative sources of financing for development, but they could not substitute for the national will to increase assistance.

74. Lithuania was increasing its contribution to development, focusing on East-East technical cooperation. Its experience in building democracy and good governance, promoting human rights and reducing poverty could be valuable to other countries with economies in transition. It believed that well-functioning regional cooperation was the key to reaching the development goals.

75. **Mr. Chappatte** (Observer for Switzerland) said that the Millennium Development Goals were the engine of the larger development agenda. Because the international community had made numerous pledges towards development, exceptional efforts had to be made to maintain overall policy coherence.

76. Particular attention should be given to education and health. All children in the world should receive an education enabling them to shoulder their responsibilities as adults and as citizens and to keep pace with a rapidly changing world. Education was an investment not only in the socio-economic arena but in peace and security, because it was a remedy to ignorance. All individuals should have access to basic health care, including basic medicines and adequate medical personnel, since populations that greatly suffered from illnesses could not take advantage of development opportunities. Thus, universal access to reproductive health care and respect for reproductive rights were a prerequisite for socio-economic development.

77. It had long been recognized that national authorities alone should shape development policies. However, in spite of their good intentions, developing countries sometimes lacked practical know-how, hindering policy implementation. Thus, it was vital that developing countries had competent personnel and functioning public institutions, for example, in the fields of education and health and in new areas such as direct budgetary assistance and cross-sector approaches. United Nations development agencies had an important role to play in that effort. Switzerland encouraged them in their actions and pledged its continued support.

78. **Mr. Raubenheimer** (South Africa) recalled that it was a collective moral responsibility to make the right to development a reality for everyone and to free the human race from want. He wished to refer to a few of the implementation gaps highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (E/2005/56). With regard to eradicating poverty and hunger, his delegation fully agreed on giving priority to rural development and increasing food output and incomes, and on the urgent need to launch a green revolution in Africa. South Africa stood ready to engage in actions to that end.

79. To achieve the development goals, there was also a need to incorporate a gender perspective in development policies and programmes, and women and girls should be involved in decision-making and policy development. With regard to environmental sustainability, his delegation called for the full implementation of the Plan of Implementation adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002.

80. In keeping with the agreement reached at the International Conference on Financing for Development on how best to generate resources to implement the development goals, his delegation welcomed the progress made towards increasing ODA, as represented by the European Union's announcement of timetables for that purpose and the G-8 countries'

announcement concerning multilateral debt relief for 18 least developing countries. It also welcomed proposals for additional sources of financing. Those were significant steps, but still more needed to be done.

81. His delegation called for further consideration of the debt problems of other poor and middle-income countries. Donor countries which had not yet done so should declare timetables to achieve the 0.7 per cent target, and should take additional measures to encourage investment flows to developing countries. South Africa fully subscribed to the notion of trade as an engine of development, and hoped that the idea would be taken up at the September Summit, which should also provide firm political will to the upcoming Sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, to be held in Hong Kong in December 2005.

82. Having drawn up detailed strategies for development at past United Nations conferences, the Member States now faced the challenge of implementation, with each country having primary responsibility for its own development. But since the commitments had been agreed to in public, the questions about each country's implementation should also be asked and answered in public. The United Nations, as the convenor of the conferences, therefore had a role to play in highlighting the degree of implementation of the commitments, providing a platform to assess the progress made at all levels.

83. South Africa therefore endorsed the Secretary-General's proposals that the Economic and Social Council should play a stronger role in keeping progress under review, and should strengthen its capacity to monitor and evaluate implementation by both developing and developed countries. Accordingly, it supported the suggestion for a development cooperation forum and for the Council to serve as a platform to review strategies, focusing on a truly global partnership for development. The responsibility for development must be shared by all nations in a transparent and equitable manner so as to create an enabling environment conducive to development and poverty eradication.

84. **Mr. Sevilla Somoza** (Nicaragua), after endorsing the statement of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) should be part of a larger, complete development agenda. Regions such as Latin America required a long-term programme that was more ambitious than the MDGs. To that end, Nicaragua's national development plan, with the involvement of all sectors, set medium- and long-term goals for comprehensive development. Official development assistance should conform to the priorities of the Government of Nicaragua, should be deployed more efficiently and more effectively and should be directly aimed at sustainable socio-economic development. Meetings and declarations such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness contributed valuable goals and benchmarks, but it was up to the receiving countries to create rapid-action development mechanisms on the ground, in accordance with their own priorities.

85. It was of concern that, according to the report of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean entitled "*The Millennium Development Goals: a Latin American and Caribbean perspective*", progress towards the Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean was very uneven, greater efforts and resources were needed over the next decade, and several countries were unlikely to reduce their levels of extreme poverty. Further, the report singled out six countries, including Nicaragua, in which it was particularly urgent to reduce extreme poverty.

86. Nicaragua believed that, in the preparations for the High-level Plenary Meeting, the Economic and Social Council should contribute recommendations for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Finally, the reform of the Council was central to the negotiations under way, and Nicaragua was ready to endorse the Secretary-General's proposals for the Council.

87. **Ms. Utoikamanu** (Observer for Tonga) said that Tonga had over twenty years of practical experience in planning and implementing regional development groups in each of the main outer island groupings. It had achieved targets such as universal primary school education for children from ages 5 to 14, and had improved secondary school enrolment rates. Most of the population had access to safe water and sanitation facilities in rural and urban areas. The country's rating on the Human Development Index and the Human Poverty Index reflected large allocations in the areas of health and education, stagnant population growth, and sustained high levels of investment in the social sector. The Government was carrying out a comprehensive health and education development programme, with a

view to improving the quality and level of services provided.

88. Although absolute poverty was almost non-existent in Tonga, that country was highly vulnerable to external economic shocks and natural disasters. Under other definitions of poverty, however, including social, economic, and human development factors, inequality was more widespread than was usually thought. Owing to cultural obstacles, Tonga lagged behind neighbouring island countries in participation by women in decision-making, both at the local and national levels.

89. Among other regional and international efforts to enhance economic growth in the region were the Pacific Plan and the draft Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Like most other countries in the Pacific region, Tonga relied primarily on international assistance for development. Tonga joined other States in welcoming the commitment made by donors to meeting the 0.7 per cent ODA target, and other commitments made by traditional donor partners to continue support for the development of countries in the Asia Pacific region.

90. In order to attain the MDGs, the Pacific Islands would need not only ODA but also Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), as well as trade and development partnerships. Tonga welcomed efforts to solve the debt problems of middle-income developing countries through debt restructuring. Lastly, that country supported the strengthening of the Council, in particular the proposal to hold annual progress assessments at the ministerial level and believed that it should serve as a high-level development cooperation forum and regularize its work in post-conflict management.

91. **Ms. Bloem** (Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO)), speaking on behalf of the Council's NGO/Civil Society Forum held in March, said that the ability of NGOs to address the Council at the highest level constituted a major breakthrough in their consultative relationship. The NGO/Civil Society Forum hoped that the Ministerial Declaration would reflect some of its recommendations on the implementation of the MDGs, as well as the results of the major world conferences of the 1990s. It believed that the Council, which had strong legitimacy among people's organizations around the world, was the single institution that should be empowered to implement development goals and to coordinate development efforts. It therefore supported the strengthening of the Council in view of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General and suggestions made by NGOs at its recent hearings before the General Assembly. In that regard, she referred Member States to the statements and recommendations of NGOs contained in documents E/2005/1-28.

92. At the NGO/Civil Society Forum, NGOs had focused first on Goal 8, calling for the formulation of clear and transparent indicators, especially for ODA. NGOs had expressed their concern at the lack of mechanisms to monitor Goal 8, the only MDG that was the responsibility of the developed countries, and stressed the importance of adjusting goals and indicators to national realities. In particular, they wanted to participate in designing policies for the attainment of the MDGs and the formulation of indicators; they did not want a vague monitoring function. They had also emphasized the need for synergy between development actors and for harmonization among donors, welcoming the G-8 countries' debt-cancellation initiative for the least developed countries. Concerned, however, that that step might reduce already scarce ODA resources, they urged Governments to keep their promises to meet the 0.7 per cent ODA target. In that regard, they were encouraged that the European Union had set a timeline for reaching that target.

93. The NGO/Civil Society Forum had also recommended that developed countries should be lobbied to eliminate trade barriers and subsidies, especially in the area of agriculture, in order to encourage exports by the rural poor in developing countries. Participants recommended harmonizing the work of institutions offering assistance and such economic authorities as the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO), and called for a positive outcome of the Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference.

94. In the view of the NGO/Civil Society Forum, a genuine dialogue needed to be created with persons living in extreme poverty, for the attainment of Goal 1. The NGO community largely agreed that gender should be a cross-cutting issue in the implementation of the MDGs and should not be restricted to Goals 3 and 5, that investments should be made in education for girls

and women, especially in the area of information and communications technologies (ICT), and that small-scale enterprises and self-help groups for women should be encouraged.

95. The NGO/Civil Society Forum also strongly believed that the MDGs must be tailored to the needs of local communities as well as to their cultural realities, condemned a one-size-fits-all approach, and encouraged support for the initiatives of indigenous peoples in designing plans for the implementation of the MDGs. CONGO, in particular, felt that information and communications technologies for development should play a greater role in attaining the MDGs. NGOs had made a unique contribution to the adoption of the outcome documents of the major world conferences of the 1990s, and were ready to join forces with the Council to make those commitments, including the MDGs, a reality for the world's poor in the new millennium.

96. **Mr. Clerc** (Droit à l'énergie-SOS futur) said that his organization grouped together 200 organizations in 63 countries. Its objectives were the recognition of the right to energy as a human right, along with access to energy, and the preservation of the planet for the benefit of future generations. Energy meant, among other things, health, education, transportation and communications. The link between the access to energy and poverty was absolutely direct. Although the MDGs did not directly refer to energy, their attainment was impossible without energy. His organization had identified five key actors in the area of access to energy: States and large regions, international institutions, the energy industry, civil society, and NGOs and civil associations.

97. It was fundamental for energy companies to be privately owned, and for their investments in developing countries to be protected. His organization proposed the establishment of a United Nations programme to universalize access to energy, along with a world energy access agency, under the auspices of the United Nations. Such a structure would make it possible to merge the interests and resources of States, international institutions, and the energy industry. It could help to mobilize the necessary capital, in a democratic and transparent framework, giving investors the guarantees they needed in an unstable economic environment, in order to work on achieving sustainable economic development, which in turn would aid in providing energy and electricity to developing countries, and access to microcredits, fair trade, and related services, in particular information technology.

98. Developing countries had no globalization ideology; they merely needed results. His organization worked toward energy access likewise without ideologies or dogma. If the political will was mustered to provide access to energy, Droit à l'énergie-SOS futur, wherever it was located throughout the world, was prepared to offer its services to institutions with a view to attaining those goals by 2015, or earlier.

99. **Mr. Yumkella** (Director-General, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said he would focus on two issues. The first was achieving a poor-poor private-sector led industrial transformation. A great deal of conceptual thinking was currently devoted to studying the patterns of growth that would empower the poor; it was becoming clear that the key to long-term poverty reduction was a dynamic private industry sector that would create employment and generate income, especially for poor and disadvantaged groups in rural areas. Major reductions in poverty had occurred in the last two decades in China, Japan and Malaysia, among other countries, on the basis of a multisector assault on poverty. It was of paramount importance to replicate such strategies, and interregional partnerships should be encouraged for that purpose, for example, between Asia and Africa.

100. The multilateral system and the current Council session should make a commitment to search for practical strategies and best practices that could lead to genuine poverty alleviation, including south-south cooperation. In the fight against such diseases as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, public-private partnerships should be strengthened in order to encourage local production of essential drugs in developing countries — a process that had been successful in such places as Brazil, Cuba, India and Thailand. Corporate responsibility strategies had also been shown to be effective in addressing social development goals in a number of cases.

101. The second issue was achieving greater coherence in economic development among various agencies, an area in which he believed the Council had a major role to play. The recent UNIDO proposal entitled "Enhancing the Contribution of the United Nations System in the Field of Economic Development

to Achieve MDGs", foresaw the creation of a voluntary mechanism for coordinated action to unleash the full potential of the system for the fulfilment of the MDGs, to facilitate a more rational division of work on economic development within the United Nations system, to promote specialization in the core competencies of the organizations concerned, and to enhance synergies. He agreed that creating sustainable jobs was the key to poverty alleviation. That was only achievable, however, if competitiveness and efficiency were encouraged in poor economies. The proposal had gained strong support from the United Nations system, and an open-ended task force had been created to pursue it further.

102. Since most of the poor were in rural areas, it was essential for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UNIDO, the two agencies in the United Nations system that covered the productive sectors, to work together. Linking farmers to markets would be more effective if they were helped to add value to their commodities. Linking poor economies to the global trading system benefited the poor more if they produced more highly-valued products. UNIDO planned to enhance its collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to pursue some of those goals.

103. **Mr. Yildirim** (Istanbul International Brotherhood and Solidarity Association (IBS)) said that his organization had its headquarters in Istanbul and was active in more than 15 countries, primarily in the areas of humanitarian aid, education, and social and cultural development. After the 2004 tsunami in Asia, IBS had sent a team to distribute such essentials as food, medicines, drinking water, clothes and sanitary materials. But its most important area of concern was child protection: more than 40,000 children had lost one or both parents as a result of the tsunami. IBS had chosen to concentrate its efforts on the traditional boarding schools, which had opened their doors to orphans and other affected children, and was currently providing full financing for two of those schools. It had renovated old buildings, constructed a dormitory, library and kitchen, and built housing for teachers.

104. Furthermore, in conjunction with other NGOs, IBS had undertaken a housing project for a thousand families, in the small town of Lamno, Indonesia, which had been totally destroyed. One of the major problems IBS had encountered in the field was transportation: the main roads had been destroyed by the tsunami. The United Nations had given vital support by providing the use of a helicopter to transport necessary material to regions which would have been otherwise inaccessible, and he wished to offer sincere thanks to the Organization and its staff for that effort.

The meeting rose at 7.30 p.m.